second deflector generate deflection fields of different strengths.

10. (New) An electron optical column as in claim 1, wherein said scanning deflector comprises octupole deflectors.

11. (New) An electron optics assembly as in claim 1, wherein said scanning deflector comprises titanium alloy elements brazed to a ceramic substrate.

12. (New) An electron optics assembly for a multi-column electron optical system comprising:

means for generating a multiplicity of electron beams;

a multiplicity of focus lenses, configured such that there is a corresponding focus lens for each column; and

a multiplicity of scanning deflectors situated above said focus lenses, such that there is a corresponding scanning deflector for each column, each said scanning deflector comprising a first deflector and a second deflector configured to provide telecentric scanning of said electron beams on a specimen substrate positioned below said focus lenses.

13. (New) An electron optics assembly as in claim 6, wherein said scanning deflectors are electrostatic deflectors.

14. (New) An electron optics assembly as in claim 7, wherein said first deflectors and said second deflectors generate electric fields of opposite polarities.

15. (New) An electron optical column as in claim 6, wherein said first deflectors and said second deflectors generate deflection fields of different strengths.

16. (New) An electron optics assembly as in claim 6, wherein said scanning deflectors are octupole deflectors.

17. (New) An electron optics assembly as in claim 6, wherein each of said scanning deflectors comprises titanium alloy elements brazed to a ceramic substrate.